



Ricky Smith—Omaha World-Herald

'Mr. Intelligence': Church in Nebraska

## Last Word on The CIA?

The nation's intelligence community was braced for yet another round of revelations and recommendations this week—a two-volume final report from Sen. Frank Church's select committee. But from the hints that seeped through the committee's tight security blanket, there was little cause for concern. Generally polite and cautious throughout its investigation, the committee was expected to produce only the mildest of shock waves. The big question was whether its long-awaited report could really rekindle the passion for reform of U.S. cloak-and-daggering that had first been aroused by the disclosures of CIA and FBI improprieties almost eighteen months ago. For committee chairman Church, a more personal question loomed: Did the debate over intelligence still have enough energy to fuel his late-starting Presidential campaign?

Church had clearly undergone a significant change of mind since the days when he said the CIA might be a "rogue elephant on a rampage." In the areas of both foreign and domestic

report was expected to propose a multitude of procedural changes (scores in the area of foreign operations alone) but conclude that the agencies involved still deserve more praise than blame. "It will argue that it is absolutely essential for the agencies we have to continue," said a White House source close to the Church committee. And while the intelligence agencies themselves might not be completely satisfied with the report, its proposals were generally expected to be ones they could live with.

**Control:** Those familiar with the committee's work said that Church and company had already succumbed to the arguments of the CIA—and a cautious new attitude toward intelligence in the Capital—by avoiding any mention of failures, abuses or covert operations not previously disclosed. More than half the volume on foreign operations was said to be concerned with tightening up reporting and control procedures, mandating the creation of clear lines of responsibility and of written records showing that the President had approved critical covert actions (and notified Congress, when possible). The volume on domestic intelligence was expected to say that operations targeted on U.S. citizens should not be the province of the CIA or military intelligence agencies but solely a responsibility of the FBI or another Justice Department branch. "It doesn't mean there would be less of it," said another source, "but it would get the CIA out of the business."

The report was also expected to stress top-level coordination of all U.S. intelligence functions, and last week new CIA boss George Bush already seemed to be moving in that direction. Bush named veteran agency analyst and administrator Henry E. Knoche, 51, to replace retiring Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters as his chief aide. Knoche will run the CIA's day-to-day operations and free Bush to better mesh the efforts of all eight foreign-intelligence agencies.

Whether Congress, too, would fall into step with the Church proposals was far less clear. This week's report was expected to praise the executive limits placed on intelligence operations by Ford, but call for legislation to back them up. Also sought would be a strong Congressional oversight committee, but insiders doubted that the report could provoke sufficient public sentiment to force longtime intelligence watchdogs such as Senators Stennis to yield to any new panel. The result, said one source, might well be a new

tee—but an unavoidably weak one.

The battle over intelligence reform is scheduled to begin in earnest on the Senate floor next week, but Church himself is increasingly an absentee leader. His time is now spent mostly on his long-delayed Presidential effort, an effort that Church and his followers hope will gain glamour and attention from his much-publicized chairmanship of the Senate's intelligence panel. At the least, aides say, the release of this week's report—and the ensuing debate—should boost Church's name recognition and media coverage in a string of Western states—Nebraska, Oregon, home-state Idaho and Nevada—where he makes his first primary races. Success there, he hopes, will give him enough momentum to collect liberal support for a credible showing in the California, New Jersey and Ohio races on June 8. And that, conceivably, could be just enough to make him an attractive rising star among the Presidential—or Vice Presidential—contenders if the party is deadlocked come the convention.

But much of Church's appeal, inevitably, would be as the Senate's "Mr. Intelligence," and given the new, hands-off mood in Washington and around the country, it was not clear whether Church's long months of investigation and report-writing would have any greater impact on the nation's Presidential politics than on the reform of its entrenched intelligence establishment.

—DAVID M. ALPERN with ANTHONY MAFREO and EVERY CLARK in Washington



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